

'Save peace while it lasts,' says General Assembly President, ahead of UN summit on sustaining peace

The world needs a new approach to peace, which is why the United Nations General Assembly will hold a major meeting next week to discuss ways to foster peace by focusing on conflict prevention, mediation, dialogue and diplomacy, the 193-member body's President has said.

"By preventing conflict, we save human lives and we also save billions of dollars," said Assembly President Miroslav Lajcak, in a recent interview with *UN News*. "Therefore, we have to focus on prevention of conflicts rather than consequences of conflicts. We have to save peace while it lasts, not to deal with the situation once peace is lost."

"There is no development, there is not protection of human rights if there is no peace," Mr. Lajcak stressed, recalling the UN was created to achieve peace and the first sentence of the [UN Charter](#) is about saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

The [High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace](#) will take place at UN Headquarters in New York on 24 and 25 April, bringing together leaders of political leaders, UN entities and civil society.

It is expected to be the largest gathering of Heads of State and Government and Ministers at UN Headquarters since the General Debate in September 2017, and a "key legacy" event for Mr. Lajcak's presidency, as his spokesman put it.

The meeting will be held in line with "twin" resolutions in 2016 of the General Assembly and the Security Council on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. These resolutions renew the UN's commitment to conflict prevention as embodied in the UN Charter.

On Friday, Amena Yassine, Senior Adviser to the Assembly President, briefed reporters in New York, the meeting is expected to produce two key outcome documents – a summary of discussions as well as a resolution aimed at reviewing implementation of the 2016 resolution and recommending ways to improve the work of UN on peacebuilding.

In a recent op-ed piece, titled *A New Approach to Peace*, Mr. Lajcak cited some examples of "sustaining peace."

"Some might say that true lasting peace is impossible in certain parts of the world. But it is not. I have seen this firsthand," he wrote.

When Montenegro split from Serbia, peace was not a given, he wrote, adding: "In fact, some people were predicting serious violence. But through intense

diplomatic efforts, and real political will, peace persevered. And it has lasted – with no signs that it will waver in the future.”



UNIC Bogota/Brendan Verma

President of the General Assembly, Miroslav Lajčák, in Bogota, Colombia, 16 March 2018.

He also said indigenous communities in south Colombia are working with the UN to build peace through strengthening social bonds. “I was inspired to see villagers, some of whom had suffered through more than 50 years of war, excited about their futures. One woman told me about her people’s determination not to slide back into conflict.”

[A bio-based, recycle-reuse economy can feed the world and save the planet – UN agency](#)

Transforming pineapple skins into packaging or fashioning t-shirts from marine refuse may sound far-fetched but it is becoming clearer that an economy based on biomass can help tackle global problems like pollution and climate change, the United Nations agriculture agency said on Friday.

A sustainable bioeconomy, which uses biomass – organic materials, such as plants and animals and fish – as opposed to fossil resources to produce food and non-food goods “is foremost about nature and the people who take care of

and produce biomass,” a senior UN [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#) official [said](#) at the 2018 Global [Bioeconomy Summit](#) in Berlin, Germany.

This means family farmers, forest people and fishers, who are also “holders of important knowledge on how to manage natural resources in a sustainable way,” she explained.

Maria Helena Semedo, Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) Deputy Director-General for Climate and Natural Resources, stressed how the agency not only works with member States and other partners across the conventional bioeconomy sectors – agriculture, forestry and fisheries – but also relevant technologies, such as biotechnology and information technology to serve agricultural sectors.

“We must foster internationally-coordinated efforts and ensure multi-stakeholder engagement at local, national and global levels,” she said, noting that this requires measurable targets, means to fulfil them and cost-effective ways to measure progress.

She held sway that with innovation playing a key role in the bio sector, we should ensure that all the knowledge – traditional and new should be equally shared and supported.

Feeding the world, saving the planet

Although there is enough food being produced to feed the planet, often due to a lack of access [estimates show](#) that some 815 million people globally are chronically undernourished.

“Bioeconomy can improve access to food, such as through additional income from the sale of bio-products,” said Ms. Semedo.

She also noted its potential contribution to addressing climate change, albeit with a warning against oversimplification.

“Just because a product is bio does not mean it is good for climate change, it depends on how it is produced, and in particular on much and what type of energy is used in the process,” she elaborated.

FAO has a longstanding and wide experience in supporting family farmers and other small-scale biomass producers and businesses.

Ms. Semedo, informed the summit that with the support of Germany, FAO together with a multistakeholder international sustainable bioeconomy working group is currently developing sustainable bioeconomy guidelines.

Some 25 cases from around the world have already been identified to serve as successful bioeconomy examples to develop good practices.

A group of women fishers in Zanzibar are producing cosmetics from algae – opening up a whole new market with sought-after niche products; in Malaysia, a Government programme supports community-based bioeconomy; and in Colombia, a community is transforming pineapple skins into biodegradable packaging and

honey into royal jelly – and these are just a few examples of a bioeconomy in action.

“Together, let’s harness the development for sustainable bioeconomy for all and leave no one behind,” concluded Ms. Semedo.

INTERVIEW: ‘I want to contribute to the service of humanity,’ says first-time UN peacekeeper from Indonesia

It is Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro’s first deployment with an international peacekeeping operation. The Indonesian police officer serves with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), a region of Sudan where conflict has left some 2.7 million people displaced and over 2 million in need of humanitarian assistance.

Peace has remained elusive in Darfur, where some 16,000 [UNAMID](#) personnel are deployed to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian aid and help the political process. While Mr. Yudhantoro says his days are filled with “amazing experiences,” he notes that working in an environment with civilian, police and military components from different parts of the world has its challenges. *This interview has been edited for content and clarity.*

UN News: Tell us a little bit about your background.

Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro: My name is Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro. I’m with the Indonesian Formed Police Unit (FPU)-10 here in UNAMID. Back home, I am stationed in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. I graduated from the Indonesian Police Academy in 2007 and have served with the Indonesian National Police for the past 10 years. Additionally, I studied policing science, criminal investigation, cyber analysis, intelligence analysis and Japanese at the Indonesian Police Language School. Prior to joining UNAMID, I held the position of Chief, Intelligence Division in West Lombok District Police, Indonesia.

UN News: How long have you been with UNAMID and what are your responsibilities?

Serving in a UN peacekeeping mission requires a high standard of capability, solid discipline and quick decision-making in response to emerging situations.

Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro: I have been here for three months. My main

responsibilities entail management of the operational duties of the Indonesian FPU, which involves controlling the personnel's operational activities in the field, in my role as operational officer in my contingent.

UN News: What led you to join the mission?

Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro: My motivation was basically driven by my need to gain experience in the field, working for an international peacekeeping mission. I also want to enhance my knowledge about the UN and AU peacekeeping mission operational skills. Most importantly, I want to contribute to the service of humanity, as this is enshrined in our nation's principles. I have, since my arrival in Darfur, observed that the conflict which took place here in this region requires the presence and services of dedicated peacekeepers who can provide the necessary protection and humanitarian assistance to the affected communities.

UN News: Describe what a typical day at the mission is like for you.

Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro: For me, all days here are full of amazing experiences. As an operational officer, my activities start around 8 a.m., when I take the morning roll call. From 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., I conduct daily training for the Tactical Section in our Camp. From 11 a.m. until 1 p.m., I go to Main Road and Khutum Road for inspection of our peacekeepers on duty. At around about 3 p.m., I come back to my office to lead the meeting with the different sections in my contingent and also use the time to prepare the activity schedule for the following day. From 5 p.m. until around 7 p.m., I have my physical exercises to keep my body healthy. It's important to keep the mind and body in good shape to be able to offer full services as a peacekeeper in the mission.



UN Photo/Amin Ismail

Yudhantoro says serving in a UN peacekeeping mission requires a high standard of capability, solid discipline and quick decision-making in response to emerging situations.

UN News: What are some of the highlights of serving with the peacekeeping mission?

Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro: All our operations should conform to UN DPKO [[Department of Peacekeeping Operations](#)] rules and guidelines; we must adhere to relevant SOPs [Standard Operating Procedures] that govern our operations; we must always have utmost respect for diversity and humanity in our workplace and operational area and create good relations with other peacekeepers we interact with daily in the mission area.

UN News: What are some of the challenges for you personally?

Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro: UNAMID is composed of so many civilian, police and military components from different parts of the world. That can be challenging in the operational space. All have different cultures and traditions. My challenge lies in the need to acquaint myself with the different norms and cultures of fellow peacekeepers; to respect and adapt quickly to these different work and social approaches; take on board the diverse local cultures, even in our operational plans; respect local laws; and deal with the harsh local weather!

UN News: What do your family and friends back home think about your service with [UN peacekeeping](#)?

Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro: They are very proud of me because being part of an international peacekeeping mission, especially one as large as UNAMID, is a major achievement. Not everyone in my country can get an opportunity to join a UN mission. I sincerely hope that after completion of my service with UNAMID, an opportunity will be availed to me to share my experiences, including the achievements and challenges of being a UN peacekeeper, and what the mission means to the host community.

UN News: How would you describe your overall experience as a UN peacekeeper? Is there one particular experience/memory you will take back with you when you return home?

Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro: Serving in a UN peacekeeping mission requires a high standard of capability, solid discipline and quick decision-making in response to emerging situations.

The memory I will take home is one related to the decision-making skills that I have certainly acquired since my arrival here, especially during my operational interactions with my counterparts within the contingent and from other components of the mission. This is especially true in my daily work, as I have to coordinate with other peacekeepers from other countries who may have different approaches or positions to issues at hand. In such cases, I have learnt to exercise the spirit of compromise and listening to ensure that we arrive at the best solution to the problem at hand, without prejudice to the people and the country we serve.

UN News: What would you say to others in your home country who are considering serving with the UN?

Hernawan Rizky Yudhantoro: I would strongly urge them to work hard to enhance their professional skills and capabilities, especially in operational conversations and decision-making; urge them to internalize their knowledge of UN SOPs and relevant guidelines; and polish up their English language skills – as you know language is the window to the world. And most importantly, I would urge them to have maximum respect for diversity and humanity for the people they serve and serve with.

UN chief condemns abduction and killing of media workers near Ecuador-Colombia border

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has condemned the kidnapping and killing three media workers near the border between Ecuador and Colombia, confirmed on 13 April, as well as the subsequent kidnapping of two other Ecuadorian nationals.

“These acts highlight the threats posed by criminal groups operating on the border between Ecuador and Colombia,” said the Secretary-General in a statement attributable to his spokesperson.

In that regard, the UN chief welcomes the close cooperation between both countries to address the common threat, the statement added.

Mr. Guterres also reiterated the UN’s availability to support the two Governments in the areas deemed necessary.

The Secretary-General also expressed his condolences to the families of the victims, and his sympathy and solidarity to the Government and the people of Ecuador.

According to reports, the three media workers – two journalists and their driver – were taken near the village of Mataje, in northern Ecuador, on 26 March. They worked for the Ecuadorian newspaper, El Comercio.

‘Give peace a chance; give children a

chance,' senior UN peacekeeping official says visiting South Sudan

All stakeholders in South Sudan must “engage genuinely and constructively in finding a political solution” to the conflict there, a senior United Nations peacekeeping official said at the end of her four-day visit.

“There is [no military solution](#) to the conflict,” UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita told reporters in the war-ravaged country’s capital, Juba, underscoring the importance of the peace talks facilitated by the regional body, the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD).

A key forum led by IGAD to revive the peace process, which will resume soon, offers an important opportunity that needs to be seized, she said, urging warring parties to “adhere scrupulously to the terms of the December 2017 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement” – an accord adopted at the Forum’s previous round held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

“But peace will not be won in Addis Ababa only,” Ms. Keita said, stressing that it must be won in every state of South Sudan where politically motivated intercommunal violence has caused numerous fatalities in the past month.

“The fighting between the government and rebel forces, which broke out in several parts of Greater Upper Nile and the Bahr-El-Ghazal in the past few weeks, has to stop once and for all,” she said.

Ms. Keita said the UN is committed to supporting people-to-people peace initiatives, reconciliation efforts and the national dialogue process “provided they are genuinely inclusive, transparent and offer complementary platforms through the efforts of IGAD.”

“If they are, we will not hesitate to tell the opposition leaders: ‘Think about the country beyond your individual interest. Give peace a chance. Give your children a chance. Every opportunity for peace, every chance to save lives, has to be seized,’” she said.

David Shearer, the Head of the UN Mission in South Sudan, known as [UNMISS](#), highlighted the many ways the Mission is supporting the peace process, internationally and locally, as a part of its mandate.

“We have provided logistical support to get the national dialogue to the places they need to go to, in other words helicopters and planes. We have provided financial support directly to the dialogue,” Mr. Shearer said, in response to a question about what the Mission was doing to support efforts to find a political solution.

“We have provided technical support to bring in the experience of national dialogues across the world. In those ways, we have supported the peace

process. It is a critical part of our mission,” he added.

Since gaining independence in 2011, South Sudan has spent much of its short life mired in conflict, as what began as a political face-off between President Salva Kiir and former Vice-President Riek Machar erupted into full-blown war late in 2013.